

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 EB-07 DLOS-09 OES-07 PA-02

PRS-01 USIA-15 HEW-06 /062 W

-----038308 132037Z /70

R 131626Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2757

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLAS PANAMA 5024

MEXICO FOR FISHERIES ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, EFIS, PN

SUBJECT: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ON BACTERIA AFFECTING SHRIMP

1. PANAMANIAN NEWSPAPER LA REPUBLICA ON JUL 7, UNDER HEADLINE "INVESTIGATION OF BACTERIA WHICH AFFECTS SHRIMP," REPORTED THAT DR. MIGUEL KOURANY, CHIEF, DEPARTMENT OF BACTERIOLOGY, GORGAS MEMORIAL LABORATORY WAS INVESTIGATING A NEW BACTERIA VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS THAT CAUSE STOMACH DISTURBANCES, AND THAT ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO MORE THAN 50 PERSONS ON CONTADORA ISLAND IN PANAMA BAY WERE AFFECTED BY EATING SHRIMP WHICH CONTAINED THIS BACTERIA.

2. NEWSPAPER ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN SUCH THAT A READER MIGHT INTERPRET REPORT AS SAYING A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM EXISTS PRESENTLY. THAT IS NOT SO.

3. AS PANAMA IS EXPORTER OF SHRIMP TO U.S., EMBASSY CALLED GORGAS MEMORIAL LABORATORY. BOTH DR. KOURANY AND DR. ABRAM BENENSON, DIRECTOR OF THE LABORATORY, STATED THE BACTERIA IS NOT A SIGNIFICANT HEALTH PROBLEM TO EITHER THE PANAMANIAN CONSUMER NOR THE U.S. CONSUMER. VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS IS A DIARRHEA-CAUSING BACTERIA "MORE COMMON  
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TO CHESAPEAKE BAY THAN TO PANAMA." THE SCIENTISTS SAID THEY KNOW OF NO RECENT LOCAL CASES OF DISEASE CAUSED BY THE SUBJECT BACTERIA (WHICH IS KILLED BY 10 MINUTES OF BOILING).

4. THE GORGAS MEMORIAL LABORATORY RESEARCH IS TO TEST THE EFFECTS OF THE BACTERIA ON FOOD SHRIMP. THE METHODOLOGY IS TO CONTAMINATE HEALTHY SHRIMP AND STUDY THEM RATHER

THAN FIND AND STUDY CONTAMINATED SHRIMP, WHICH ARE NOT  
READILY AVAILABLE.

5. DR. BENENSON ASSURED EMBASSY OFFICER THAT GORGAS  
MEMORIAL LABORATORY WORKS CLOSELY WITH PANAMANIAN HEALTH  
MINISTRY AND WOULD REPORT TO THEM IF ANY HEALTH MENACE  
DISCOVERED IN PANAMA, AND CERTAINLY INFORM EMBASSY IF THEY  
WERE TO KNOW OF CONTAMINATED PRODUCTS WHICH MIGHT ULTIMATELY  
REACH OR BE DIRECTED TO THE U.S. CONSUMER.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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